

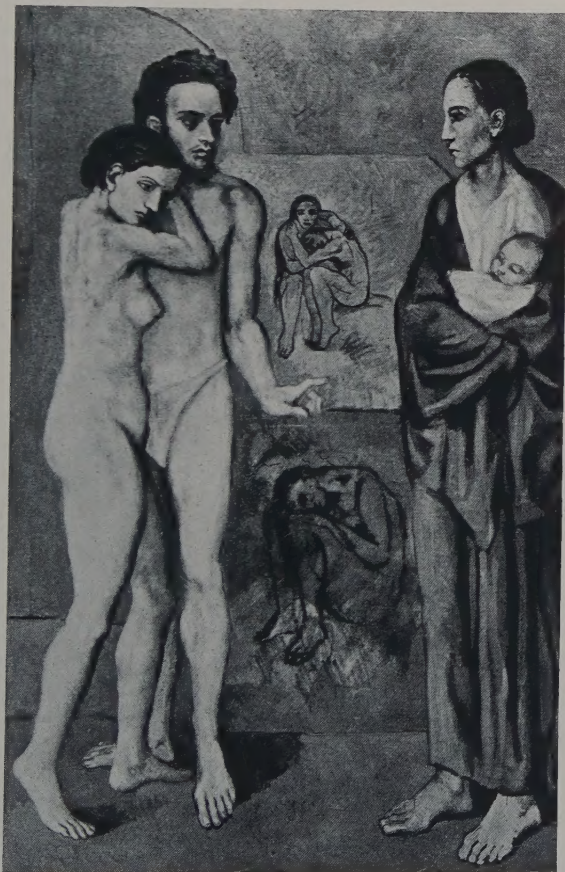
Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design

Issued Quarterly

Vol. XXVI

JANUARY, 1938

No. 1



LA VIE

by Pablo Picasso

Museum Appropriation, 1937

Entered as second-class matter January 16, 1913, at the post office at Providence, Rhode Island, under the Act of August 24, 1912

Copyright, 1938, by Rhode Island School of Design. All rights reserved

THE DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM

DR. ALEXANDER DORNER, formerly Director of the Landes Museum of Hanover, Germany, has been appointed to succeed the late Mr. L. Earle Rowe as Director of the Museum. Dr. Dorner studied at the University of Königsberg and at the University of Berlin, and received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the latter institution in 1919. The field of his special interests has been Romanesque architecture, the evolution of German art, and the development of modern painting. Among his publications are "Romanesque Architecture in Saxony and Westphalia," "The Works of Winckelmann," "Wilhelm Busch, Painter and Designer," "Hundred Years of Art in Hanover," and "Hundred Years of the Art of Building in Hanover." He has made a particular study of the development of the dwelling house and the character of modern architecture, and of the development of the conception of space from prehistory to the present time. From 1930 to 1933 he was joint publisher of the "Museum of the Present."

"LA VIE," BY PICASSO

There can be no Art without Life.
There can be no Life without Growth.
There can be no Growth without Change.
There can be no Change without Controversy.¹

THE Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design announced last November the acquisition of a large important painting by Picasso entitled, "La Vie." This exceptionally fine canvas is dated 1903 and belongs to the second period or "blue period."

"La Vie" was reproduced in "The Architectural Review," Vol. LXX of 1931; "Atelier," Vol. 1 of 1931; "La Revue de l'Art," Vol. LXII of 1932; and in "The Art News," of August 13, 1932. To quote the latter,

"This exceptionally fine canvas of the blue period was one of the most admired works in the great Picasso retrospective, held at the Galleries Georges Petit." It was formerly in the collection of Etienne Bignou.

Picasso is Spanish by birth, but is classified in the French school of painting. He was born in Malaga, Spain, in 1881. His father, who was a drawing teacher, trained him at an early age. He attended an art school in Barcelona, and from the first was influenced by El Greco and the Spanish tradition. In 1900, Picasso visited Paris for the first time. Three years later he settled there permanently. His career has been divided into the following epochs:

1902-04	Blue Period
1906	Rose Period
1907	Cubism and Negro Sculpture
1907-14	Analytical Cubism
1914-18	Synthetic Cubism
1919-23	Classical
1924-30	Surrealism

Cubism is the phase of Picasso's art that seems to be known by the majority of people. The public stood aghast at the portraits of his friends during this period. He disturbed the art world.

Picasso first exhibited in Barcelona in 1897, and since then his work has been shown in London, Cologne, Munich, Berlin, Dresden, New York and nine times in Paris. In the Carnegie International Exhibition of 1930, his portrait of his wife was awarded the First Prize.

In 1932 the artist became interested in sculpture, and for a time worked in that medium. Later, he painted compositions of strange plastic forms against colorful backgrounds, combining his experiments in sculpture with those of his surrealist period.

The painting acquired by the Museum will undoubtedly cause much comment. Some people see only the subject matter in a picture while others see only the drawing or the technique. "La Vie" is an extremely colorful painting. In reproduction the color with all its subtle play of values is lost, and the emphasis is on the

¹Quoted from "Evolution in Modern Art," by Frank Rutter.

drawing. The result is that the picture seems rather crude and a little hard. The softness and delicacy of coloring is completely obliterated.

Picasso's blue period represents the first stride of the artist and consists mainly of his early life in Paris when he reflected the morbidity of his subjects with powerful strokes of varied blues. In 1903 he returned for a year to Spain and received the full impact of El Greco. The gaunt mysticism of the latter had a profound influence; the blue tones became richer and the forms more elongated.

The blue period was a distinct manifestation of his genius. With this one color he could evoke the greatest amount of expression. The tone varied from light diaphanous to the deepest possible shade. There was no monotony. A much told story is that of Picasso's remark that he could substitute any color on his palate for any other. The subjects during this time were usually mothers in distress, poverty-stricken folk along the sea coast, starved men and women, young poets, tortured harlequins and homeless families.

"La Vie" is a puzzling picture to many. Instead of enjoying the modelling, the composition, the drawing and the superb color, people are intrigued or annoyed by the title. The public asks for a name. The artist gives one, then the public looks at the painting, reads the title and tries to figure it out. In this instance nothing could have been more appropriately named—a mother and child, two lovers—life. But students stand before the canvas and discuss the interpretation, not seeing the beauty of modelling and color. The composition is an extremely good example of Picasso's draftsmanship.

We can listen to music without having to know the title or the story, but with the visual arts association plays too important a part. Cubism was a revolt against realism, against associations. It attempted to show the value of color and line divorced from representation. But the public will always prefer paintings with a story-telling element, and the more a painting can be

associated with daily life, the more it will be admired.

Tolstoy's famous definition of art is—"Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experience them."

We all enjoy the theatre. We recognize good acting, the right costumes, period-settings and good directing. We like plays that are amusing and entertaining, and we also like plays that leave us thinking. Picasso's "La Vie" is like such a play. It has the equivalent of the excellency of the stage in its composition, drawing and color. We enjoy seeing it, and we leave with the thought—"Do we or do we not understand?" Who knows?

D. DALY

COLOR PRINTS BY UTAMARO

FOURTEEN color prints by Utamaro are the recent gift of Mrs. John D.

Rockefeller, Jr., to further enrich the superb collection of Japanese color prints of Flowers and Birds presented by her in 1934.¹ These fourteen prints are all from an album in two volumes entitled *Momo Chidori kyoka awase*, which may be translated, "Birds Compared in Humorous Songs." Some twenty-one species of birds are depicted in double page arrangement (the center fold in the paper clearly discernible in each case) with poems purporting to be bird songs in a delicate rain of Japanese calligraphy filling the vacant spaces in the designs.

This album of bird prints was executed by Utamaro in the last decade of the 18th century and was published by Tsutaya Jusaburo.² The first volume comprised a double page preface, eight plates, and a page advertising other volumes issued by

¹ Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, January, 1935.

² Binyon and Sexton, *Japanese Colour Prints*, p. 222.



WREN ON A BOUGH AND TWO SNIPE AMID REEDS

by Utamaro

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 1938

the same publisher. The second volume included a preface, seven plates, and a similar advertisement page. The group of prints given to the Museum by Mrs. Rockefeller includes all the plates save No. 2 of Volume I.

It has been said that the world lost a great naturalist when Utamaro turned from the portrayal of the beauties of nature to the portrayal of the beauties of the Yoshiwara. For the artist who was to win his greatest fame by depicting languid, willowy courtesans had, even in early youth, drawn insects, flowers and birds with a passionate fidelity to truth, and with a poetic sensitivity, seldom equalled even by Oriental artists. His teacher and foster father, Sekiyen, had praised these "pictures from his heart," with the charming humility of the teacher toward the pupil of genius, and left in writing an account of Utamaro's absorbing interest in the natural world.

From the prints by Utamaro already included in the collection—from the designs of sea-shells and sea-weed, the wonderful

gray falcon on a tree stump,³ the white herons by a snowy stream, the charming little black and white print of two sparrows⁴—we are familiar with the artist's great talent as an interpreter of Japanese bird life. These fourteen newly added prints re-affirm his agile sensitivity and his effective draughtsmanship. Let me describe them briefly.

No. 1. A pair of quail, one with head raised, beak open as if calling, the other pecking among some grasses, occupy the righthand side of the print; while on the left is a brown-winged skylark standing amid carefully drawn flowering weeds. The ground is gray; the upper two-thirds of the print untinted.

No. 3. A red-headed woodpecker on the gnarled trunk of a pine tree looks up toward a yellow-billed Japanese hawfinch perched on a branch above him. The feathery pine needles are a soft green. The entire background is gray.

³Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, January, 1935, illus. p. 9.

⁴Ibid., illus. p. 8.

No. 4. A pair of snowy heron stand huddled together on the left. Their feathers are printed in light red with some gaufrage, or blind printing; their legs and beaks are light yellowish green. On the right, a black and gray cormorant dives into pale blue water after a shoal of little fish. A print of great delicacy and technical distinction.

No. 5. A tiny yellow-breasted Japanese wren, apparently in full song, swinging on a slender branch of weeping cherry. At the left, in gray-green reeds, a pair of snipe.

No. 6. A handsomely plumaged pheasant stands in green grasses and turns his head to cry out to a pair of chimney swallows flying toward him from the upper right-hand corner of the print. The pheasant, with long black neck and black breast, red-ringed eye, rose-red, yellow and gray feathers on his back, with green and blue feathers near the tail, and the long tail feathers speckled black and brown, is a gorgeous creature.

No. 7. As if in pique, an owl and a jay face opposite ways on the forked branch of a dead tree. The brown wings of the owl are lifted, revealing his gray breast. The background is colorless.

No. 8. A domestic cock and a hen, facing opposite ways, are posed just right of center; while to the left on the bamboo sticks which support a morning-glory vine perches a Japanese bunting. A light wash of blue on the lower third of the background enhances the colors of the fowl's plumage and the effect of the purple and pink morning-glory flowers.

No. 9. (or No. 1, Volume II). A gray falcon and a small bull-headed shrike are companions, for the nonce, on the bough of a flowering plum tree. The smaller bird appears unafraid, although the falcon is spreading his great strong wings and has a predatory bend to his head. The background of the print is gray.

No. 10. Perched on a bamboo stick above a spray of large pink chrysanthem-



FALCON AND BULL-HEADED SHRIKE ON FLOWERING PLUM TREE

by Utamaro

mums is a Japanese robin. Partly hidden amid the dark green chrysanthemum leaves on the extreme right, a Manchurian great tit hangs head downward.

No. 11. On a rocky mound are two copper pheasants looking in opposite directions. To the left, beyond some bamboo leaves, stands a white-breasted wagtail.

No. 12. An owl with yellow eyes sits stolidly on a dead tree stump. On a leafy branch at left are two bullfinches with yellow breasts and ruby throats, apparently twittering gaily to the old solemnity on the stump.

No. 13. Three pigeons are in a group on the left, two of them busily pecking; on the right are two sparrows. The ground is strewn with red maple leaves and pine needles.

No. 14. On a slender bamboo spray, three yellow *mejiro* birds are huddled together; while at the right at the end of a long stalk, around which is twined a delicate vine, is a pink-breasted Japanese long-tailed tit. The background of the print is pale gray-blue, against which the yellow *mejiro* birds make a pleasing color contrast.

No. 15. A pair of wild ducks on a grassy bank, and to the left, on a curving stalk of water weed, a kingfisher. The drake has a blue head, a brown and gray body and orange feet; the female of the species is brown and gray. The female is giving voice to her opinion.

Each of these fourteen prints are really diptychs. Each half is a picture in itself, and in some cases the print is more satisfying if only one-half is viewed at a time. The reason for this is, of course, because each sheet was folded in the album, as the crease manifests.

As to the artist himself, while his origin is dubious, the events of his life are fairly well authenticated. Kitagawa Utamaro, whose real name is said to have been Kitagawa Yusuke, was born in the province of Musachi in 1753 or 1754. He was brought to Yedo by his mother when he was very young and lived in the household of the Kano painter and book-illustrator,

Sekiyeen. Under the tutelage of his foster father, Utamaro learned to paint and to illustrate books. In 1777, the first of these illustrated books appeared, in 1788, the wonderful Book of Insects and Flowers, and in 1780, the famous "Gifts of the Ebb Tide." A little more than a decade later appeared our "Birds Compared in Humorous Songs." For many years Utamaro lived with his publisher, Tsutaya.

Upon the retirement of Kiyonaga and the death of Shunsho, that is, about 1790, Utamaro became the outstanding artist making color prints in Japan. He was brilliant, sophisticated and versatile, and his prints of beautifully appressed courtesans are exquisite works of art. After 1800, intensive work and gay living weakened his powers. In 1804, he was thrown into prison because of suspected satire of the reigning Shogun, and after his imprisonment he lost his verve. In 1806 he died.

Utamaro was one of the greatest artists of the school of Ukiyo-ye, and no master of the color print depicted birds more sensitively. We are therefore happy indeed to add fourteen more prints by Utamaro to the twenty by him already included in the Rockefeller Collection.

M. A. BANKS

JOHN CODDINGTON

A NEWPORT SILVERSMITH

IN the city of Newport, where wealth was more prevalent than in New York during the fifty middle years of the eighteenth century, various examples of fine craftsmanship were wrought. Many remain scattered throughout the Eastern States as monuments to the talented workers. To supply the demand of many prosperous tradesmen, silversmiths were requested to transform coins, frequently Spanish from the West Indies, into tankards or porringers in order to preserve their silver which today would be deposited in vaults or invested in prosperous business. Unlike Holland, England, the Mother Country, encouraged trade between New

England and the West Indies, and in this way, wealth was brought to the Colonies. The New England Colonists of the eighteenth century, not many generations removed from the Puritans with their rigid manners, were averse to ornately decorated silverware. To develop beauty in hollowware, it was necessary for the silversmiths to concentrate on graceful lines and shapes. This the craftsmen developed to a remarkable degree.

During the eighteenth century, there was no silver standard, and consequently it was necessary for the patrons to rely on the honesty of the silversmiths. Judging from the pieces still in existence, these craftsmen must have been very trustworthy.

Among the noteworthy silversmiths of the beginning of the century in Newport was John Coddington. He was descended from celebrated ancestors, such as Ann Hutchinson and Governor William Coddington, and established a reputation for himself as a prominent statesman as well as an excellent craftsman.

John Coddington was born in Newport on the twenty-third of March in 1690, the son of Nathaniel and Susanna (Hutchinson) Coddington. He was the great-grandson of Ann Hutchinson, that religious teacher who was banished from Boston and who settled in Aquidneck, later the island of Rhode Island. In 1643 after her removal to New York State, she and all but one of fourteen members of her family were ruthlessly slain by the Indians near Hell Gate. Coddington, Samuel Vernon, the first outstanding Rhode Island silversmith, and Edward Winslow, a Boston resident and one of the greatest silversmiths of Colonial times, all claimed descent from this remarkable woman. It is especially interesting that three such skilled craftsmen should claim a common ancestress. One wonders if this particular talent, common to all, might not have been inherited through the family tree of the Hutchinsons.

The name of Coddington was probably derived from Cotentin, a section of Nor-

mandy. Various spellings, such as Codinton, Codington and Codyngton, occur in records in England. Some of these were recorded there as early as 1200. William Coddington, one of the founders and the first Governor of the Colony of Rhode Island, was the grandfather of the silversmith. This may be the explanation of his success as a statesman. His political career was quite varied, and we find he was a Member of the House of Deputies seven times between the years 1721 and 1729, a Clerk of the Assembly in 1723, 1727, and 1728, a Prothonotary, or chief notary, in 1727, and three times a Sheriff between 1733 and 1735. In 1726, he was also a Colonel of the Militia. After a full and eventful life, he died in 1743 at the age of fifty-three years. Although records are all that remain of his statesmanship, his examples of silver are undoubtedly treasured more today than they were when wrought in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Two of these memorable pieces have found their way to the Museum through the generosity of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth.



SILVER TANKARD

made by John Coddington

Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth, 1936

One is a tankard, characteristic of the Newport pieces made during the first half of the eighteenth century. Its cylindrical body flares slightly to an applied, molded base. Evidence of "fire-skin" enhances the beauty of the piece and can be detected on the stepped cover. This was the result of frequent annealing over the heat of a

to find favor in the beginning of the century, and by 1730, superseded the flat type. The lid of the Coddington piece is bordered by a wide rim, notched in front between S-shaped scrolls. A beautiful scroll handle, resembling the letter S in shape, relieves the monotony of the plain sides. The handle is perhaps slightly overpower-



SILVER CUP

by John Coddington

Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth, 1935

charcoal fire. The effect of the oxygen on the copper, used as an alloy, caused a gray-blue tint on the surface and is frequently visible on old pieces—those which have been spared the injurious use of a buffer. The stepped and domed lid lends height to the body. This variety began

ing in size for the small, cylindrical body. It is hollow with a venthole near the tip for the escape of air. The thumbpiece suggests a double spiral, while the handle terminates in a shield-shaped tip. An applied, molded drop relieves the flat upper surface of the handle. His mark, IC with

in an emblem, possibly a kind of fruit, is impressed on the body and on the handle.

The other piece is a cup, perhaps the more unusual of the two, and is jug-shaped, embellished with godrooning. The body rests on a molded, splay base, while the scroll handle is of the strap variety and terminates in a conventionalized leaf device. The godroons which decorate the lower section of the body are flutes and reeds, alternating, and are bordered at the top with a band of palmettes. This is all surmounted by a band of geometric devices—circles, embellished with tiny circles and ovoids—the whole forming a mid-band. On the front of the body are the letters, I*C and A*C, the initials of the Christian names, only, being of the shaded block variety. The maker's mark is impressed twice on the upper section of the body at the right of the handle.

These two pieces are beautiful examples of the superior work wrought in Rhode Island, while it was still a colony, and comprise important additions to the Museum's collection of Rhode Island silver.

D. N. CASEY

MEMORIAL EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY EUGENE VAIL

IN November a retrospective exhibition of the paintings of the late Eugene Vail was held in the galleries of the Museum. Some seventy-one paintings were on display, affording the most comprehensive resumé of this artist's work that has ever been shown in this country.

The paintings of Eugene Vail are too little known in the United States, and his compatriots are unaware of the measure of his accomplishment. This is due to the fact that the greater part of his mature life was spent abroad, his visits to his native land few and far between, and his indifference to the exhibition of his work characteristic of his whole-souled absorption in his art. To paint and still to paint was his passion, and the exposition of his canvases of minor importance.

Eugene Vail, though born in Brittany, was the son of Lawrence Eugene Vail of New York. Although his bent for art was obvious even in early youth, he yielded to the parental wish and pursued a course in mechanical engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology at Hoboken, New Jersey, and after his graduation was a member of a government geographical expedition to the West, when sketching mountains and painting portraits of Indians proved more interesting to the young engineer than his proper duties.

After a course with William M. Chase at the Art League in New York, young Vail went to Paris to study under Cabanel at the École des Beaux-Arts. Other masters who guided his youthful studies were Raphaël Collin and Dagnan Bouveret. Soon, however, he was painting independently in Brittany. In 1883, he exhibited his first picture at the Paris Salon. In 1888, he won the Gold Medal. Other honors were awarded to him in almost yearly succession at Berlin, Munich, Antwerp and Liège, and in 1904 at St. Louis he won recognition in his own country. In 1906, an exhibition of his paintings was held at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence.

Eugene Vail was one of the group of artists who made the art world conscious of the picturesque little fishing village of Etaples. His paintings of the Picardy fishermen and fishing smacks won him distinction, one large canvas, *Pare à Virer* (now in the Corcoran Gallery in Washington) gaining the gold medal of the first class at the Exposition Universelle of 1889. Another scene of boats, "On the Thames," won the Great Diploma of Honor at Berlin and made him internationally famous. A scene in Holland, *Soir de Novembre*, was acquired by the Museum of Odessa; and a picture of a fisherman's wife by the quayside, *Soir de Bretagne*, was bought by King Victor Emmanuel III for the Museo d'Arte Moderna of Venice. But Eugene Vail was not an artist of one note; having achieved a successful genre, he did not pursue it in tiresome reiteration to the end of his career.



VILLAGE IN THE SNOW

by Eugene Vail

Gift of Mrs. Eugene Vail, 1938

He turned from fisherfolk to the sea itself, and after producing a series of sensitive marine studies, painted mostly at Dordrecht on the Meuse, he plunged with enthusiasm into the interpretation of that bride of the sea, Venice,—turned joyously to translating into paint the city's brilliance and subtle nuances, the charm of its architecture and the vivacity of its life.

Perhaps it is as an interpreter of Venice that Eugene Vail will be longest remembered. He captured for us the lovely mystery of its nights, as in *La Salute in Moonlight* or *Poésie de la Nuit*; he made real for us the glorious color of its pagentry, as in *St. Mark's on a Fête Day*, with great flags blowing before the elaborate and wonderful facade; and in his trouping "shawl girls" he has focussed attention on a pattern of Venetian life even now wearing an aura of nostalgic charm.

Eugene Vail was a competent portraitist, as his canvases of Mrs. Vail and of his

children testify. In these portraits one discerns the influence of Chase and of Sargent, a pleasing reminiscence, but the touch of Eugene Vail's own style is upon them.

Charming are his "still lives." Marguerites, wild daffodils, anemones, and lilacs, daisies in a Delft vase, a sensitive study of peonies, have a freshness that leads one to think they were painted only yesterday, that the flowers that served as models have not yet withered. A fascinating "still life" of haunting beauty is entitled, *Le Mois de Marie*, and depicts an image of the Virgin piously bedecked for the "Month of Mary" as is customary in the country churches in France.

It is perhaps in his snow scenes that Eugene Vail seems most modern. The winter wonderland of Switzerland was apparently his delight. Touches of bright color against the brilliant white of the snow, the snow as a subtle mirror to reflect

the myriad colors of the surrounding scene, mountains in the grip of winter, here were themes in which he took intense pleasure. Through the generosity of Mrs. Vail, the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design is to have in its permanent collection one of these snow scenes, *Village sous la Neige*, a view of the church at Davos and surrounding buildings with a backdrop of snow draped mountain.

For many years, in fact, since the exhibition in 1906, Providence art lovers have had the privilege of seeing two of Eugene Vail's Venetian scenes on the Museum walls, *La Salute in Moonlight* and *Old Walls—Venice*. Happily there is now added to these an example of another and later phase of his art.

Eugene Vail died in December, 1934. Sensitive and sincere, his work has a solidity that endures. His friend, Henri Le Sidaner, said of him: "Vail était avant tout un véritable peintre, préoccupé de ce que pouvait être la beauté de la matière et la qualité de surface de sa toile; et il n'a jamais failli à ce qui pouvait augmenter par une constante fidélité devant la nature, l'accent de son oeuvre."

M. A. BANKS

AMERICAN DESKS IN THE MUSEUM

EDUCATIONAL advantages being practically nil in the earliest days of our country, a common need of desks and writing materials was superfluous. While there were some colonists schooled in the art of letters, the percentage was so small that desks could scarcely have been called an integral part of any household. However, the first settlers were not an ignorant band of adventurers aimlessly sailing the seas, but rather a stalwart assemblage of intelligent folk seeking new fields in which to practise their doctrines without interference. Therefore, as soon as there was reasonable assurance of a livelihood in their new-found home, there followed a return to the pursuit of learn-

ing, and as a result, writing accessories became much in demand.

Small boxes or rather miniature chests, decorated across the fronts with primitive carvings, were perhaps the earliest contrivances for holding papers or the family Bible. A pine box of this type owned by the Museum is decorated with a stamped design of intertwined flowering vines and has for a central feature, 1694, above the initials *D. B.* It is stained red, while the decoration is picked out in a deeper red and white. This box, as well as the following five pieces, were the gift of the late Mrs. Gustav Radeke, whose interest in Americana was responsible for much of the Museum's furniture collection.

With the advent of business entailing correspondence and bookkeeping, a general need of writing desks became apparent, and thus was established a trade that has never ceased.

A very early desk dating from 1680-1700 and one which has caused considerable comment among antiquarians was fashioned of pine with a separate maple frame



PINE DESK

American 1680-1700

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke, 1920

having turned legs and four heavy moulded stretchers. It is now coated with light blue paint which usually tends to offend aesthetic tastes. The slanted writing leaf is secured at the top with butterfly hinges and has at the bottom a ledge for supporting a book or paper. Inside, there are various compartments arranged in a simple manner, for being primarily a functional piece, little time was spent on artistic detail. Although invaluable for its historic interest, it can by no means be classed as a work of art, but must be accepted as a link in the development of this type of furniture.

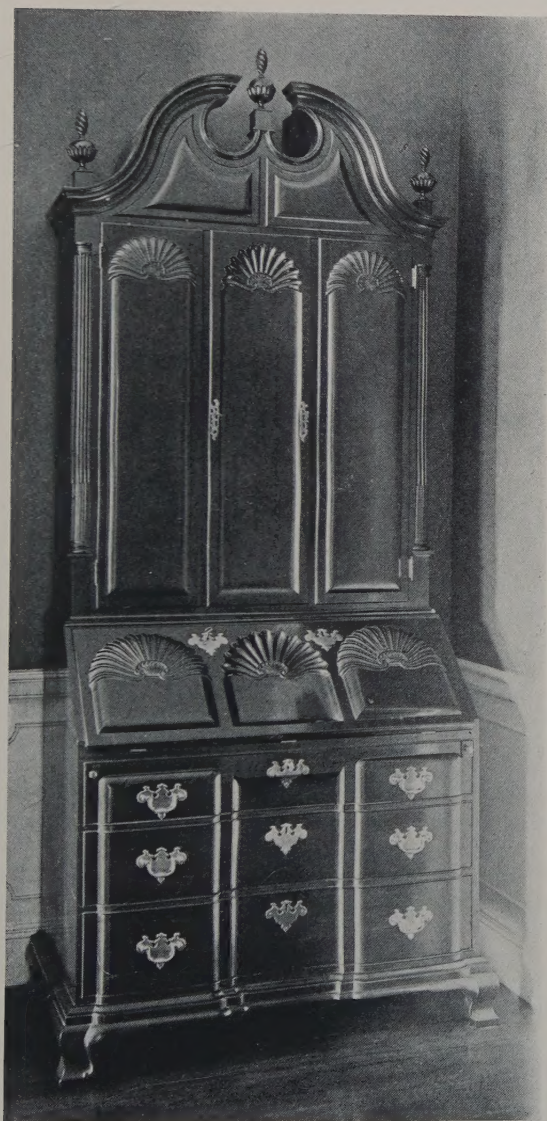
Another pine desk of the early 18th century is architecturally very similar to the one just described, but has a cabinet which is somewhat broader. In the interior, appear two tiers of five drawers each, and on the bottom of one, there is a penned note in phonetic spelling to the effect that it was sold in Massachusetts on March 3, 1829 for \$3.30. Below the writing leaf, two drawers are arranged end to end. The maple frame on which the cabinet rests has turned legs joined by side stretchers and, also, by a medial stretcher, all of them turned. The latter construction allowed ample space for the feet, while one was seated at the desk. For added convenience, the frame was also supplied with a drawer. The turnings are unusual in that the blocks which interrupt the round turnings are left with sharp edges instead of being chamfered at the corners.

With increasing business activities came a demand for larger and more intricate desks. An interesting maple one of the slant-top variety was probably made between 1700 and 1710. It is fitted with large ball feet and has the square type leaf supports characteristic of the early desks. Also, typical of the early pieces, is the cabinet interior having in the floor a well with sliding cover for allowing easy access to the top drawer while the writing leaf was in use. Shaped upright pieces divide the interior into three sections. In the center are three series of drawers and pigeonholes separated by document drawers.

At each side, the top one of two drawers is recessed. Below the writing leaf, there are two drawers placed end to end, and beneath these, two full-sized ones. Brass tear drop handles with stamped plates and escutcheons complete the ornamentation.

While the fashion for a complexity in the arrangement of drawers, pigeonholes and secret compartments claimed much of the cabinet-makers' attention, desks did become more refined in design and less bulky in form. A maple desk showing this development was made between 1740 and 1750. It has a heavy cabinet with two drawers below the leaf and a frame having cabriole legs terminating in Dutch feet. Two pendants are missing from the skirt shaped with a fancy edge. In the interior is found the usual complicated, but symmetrical plan. Parts of the woodwork have been restored, but in no way, has the original contour of the piece been changed.

Desks at which one could stand or sit on a high stool are occasionally found, and it is not unlikely that they were used in places of business where the proprietors stood, while transacting their affairs. An interesting maple desk of this kind dates from the second quarter of the 18th century. It is particularly complicated with its innumerable drawers and compartments. In the desk section below the leaf, there are in a row three small drawers the center one of which is carved with a "full-sun" pattern and below, three full-sized drawers. In the frame occurs, also, a row of three drawers, the two end ones of which have square fronts with the same "full-sun" decoration. The cabriole legs terminate in Dutch feet, and a cut-out heart decorates the skirt. Above the writing section, is a superstructure containing two cupboards, each carved with a "rising-sun" motive, vertically placed. The interior of the desk is without ornamentation. The brass handles and escutcheons are of the willow type with the exception of two heart-shaped escutcheons which repeat the design of the cut-out heart on the skirt.



SECRETARY

Attributed to John Goddard

Bequest of Charles L. Pendleton

1904

As the country prospered, fine cabinet work in expensive woods came into use. A slant-top desk restrained in design, but of extremely good proportions was the bequest in 1913 of Isaac C. Bates. It was once the property of Ebenezer Knight Dexter, a successful Providence merchant, who was born April 26, 1773, the son of Knight and Phebe Harris Dexter. Inasmuch as this desk was made at least by the time of Ebenezer's birth if not before, it must have first been owned by his father or another member of the family. Ebenezer Knight Dexter was Marshall of the District of Rhode Island for several years before his death and was also a benefactor of the poor. It was once said of him, "During the embargo, non-intercourse and war, his duties were arduous and sometimes directly contravening the wishes and the interests of a large portion of the community. Yet he so carefully and skillfully managed that he lost not the esteem and respect of his fellow-townsmen, nor the confidence of the government." He married Miss Waitstill Howell of Providence on January 1, 1805 and died August 10, 1824 leaving no children. The extent of his charitable nature may be seen in the following report published in *The Rhode Island American* of August 20, 1824. "The forty-acre farm in Providence Neck, a part of this liberal bequest, is given on the condition that the town shall erect thereon, within five years, an almshouse, which is to be inclosed with an extensive and permanent wall, within twenty years, and we hope, ere long to see a Dexter Asylum rearing its walls in these pleasant and productive fields." Those of us in Providence know that this plan was carried out according to his wishes, and, today, Dexter Asylum still stands as a noble institution.

The Dexter desk is of beautifully grained mahogany and has four drawers graduated in depth below the leaf. It is supported by ogee bracket feet. An unusual feature of the interior is the mirrored door which conceals three drawers, the removal of one of which reveals the locks to the secret compartments. By shifting two wooden

splints, the document drawers, as well as the central box, may be released thus exposing to view three drawers at the back. The small drawers on each side are fitted with graceful serpentine fronts. An indication that the Dexter family was probably interested in shipping is evinced by a sextant painted upon a panel behind the mirror. As usual brass willow handles and escutcheons finish the desk.

With the bequest in 1904 of the Charles L. Pendleton Collection of furniture, the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design became a pioneer in this field of exhibition. Included in this remarkable collection are several fine specimens of desks. One of these usually attracts the attention of furniture connoisseurs because in shape it is of the Dutch period, but the elaborate decoration carved upon it indicates a later date. Being graceful in design and small in size, it may have been made expressly for a lady. It is of mahogany and is richly carved around the frame on which the cabinet rests. Carved with the leaf pattern are the cabriole legs with claw and ball feet. The cabinet holds two drawers below the leaf, while the frame holds one.

Since the Pendleton knee-hole desk and also the one given by Miss Mary Le Moine Potter in 1933, both Goddard block-front types, have been discussed in a previous bulletin no further mention will be made of them.¹

Probably the finest secretary that the museum owns is the supposed Goddard piece in the Pendleton Collection. This term is used advisedly for we have no documentary evidence to prove that it was made by that cabinet-maker. However, it is of the Newport school and was made by a master craftsman. It is of rich dark mahogany and has a triplicate arrangement of blocked doors upon which are carved three shells, two of them convex and one concave. This pattern is also repeated on the exceedingly heavy writing leaf, below which are three blocked drawers. The broken pediment is without rosettes,

¹See Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design, Vol. XXII No. 4.

but is ornamented with the same type of flames as seen in other so-called Goddard pieces. Also, the ogee bracket feet are embellished with scrolls peculiar to this type of Rhode Island furniture. The architectural plan of the interior, including the well, practically duplicates many other similar secretaries.

Due undoubtedly to the economic spirit of the day, these early desks have been preserved and by comparison with the later types, show what remarkable progress was made in cabinet work during the 18th century.

E. T. CASEY

TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

THE success of the Brahms Chamber Music Festival last year prompted a repetition. Therefore a series of ten concerts presenting Two Hundred Years of Chamber Music were given in the Museum from October 31st to November 11th. Selected works of twenty-three composers were skilfully interpreted by the Musical Art Quartet of New York, assisted by Frank Sheridan, pianist, and other artists. Beginning with Corelli, Vivaldi and Bach, the procession of composers included Haydn, Dittersdorf, Boccherini, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, César Franck, Brahms, Tchaikowsky, Dvorák, Chausson, Debussy, and the living artists, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Dohnányi, Miaskowsky, Honegger, and Tansman.

The concerts were held in the large central gallery of the Museum, which was hung with paintings from the permanent collection. During the three day interval between the fifth and sixth concerts, the gallery was entirely rehung, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist pictures replacing those belonging to earlier schools of painting, and the important Picasso canvas, "La Vie," just purchased by the Museum, was shown for the first time.

To further emphasize the correlation of the arts, some special Museum treasure, contemporary with the compositions

played, was shown in a velvet-hung niche by which everyone attending the concerts had to pass. When Corelli's Sonata da Camera for two violins was rendered, a portrait of Francois Henri de Montmorency-Bouteville, Duke of Luxembourg, executed by the leading portrait painter of Europe in the late 17th century, Hyacinthe Rigaud, occupied the place of honor. When the concert-goers were to hear the music of Haydn and Dittersdorf, their attention was directed to a terracotta bust of a contemporary lyric poet, Jean Baptiste Rousseau, by the French sculptor, Jean Jacques Caffieri. When Mendelssohn's Octet in E Flat Major was heard, a drawing by his friend Ingres was on view. When the String Quartet in D Major by the Belgian César Franck was played, the painting, "At the Pawnbroker's," by a contemporary Belgian, Alfred Stevens, hung in the niche. A composition by Debussy, who was called the father of Impressionism in music, was related to the "Young Woman in Blue," by Manet, the father of Impressionism in painting. The music of the radical modern, Miaskowsky, found its counterpart in a painting by the distortionist, Modigliani. Thus two centuries of chamber music were reflected in two hundred years of pictorial and plastic arts.

During the concerts, the galleries and halls of the Museum were brightened by jars and bowls of flowers. Not only was the beauty of rhythmical sound enhanced by the beauty created by the cunning hand of the painter and sculptor, but to heap the measure, the beauty of flowers was added through the continuous generosity of Mr. and Mrs. William E. Brigham.

By encouraging the reciprocal relation of all the arts the Rhode Island School of Design hopes to fulfill its true mission in the life of the community.

M. A. BANKS

Painting, like poetry, selects from the universe what it considers best for its own end.

Goya

*Bulletin of the
Rhode Island School of Design
Providence*

OFFICERS

Mrs. MURRAY S. DANFORTH . . .	President
Hon. THEODORE FRANCIS GREEN	Vice-Pres.
HOUGHTON P. METCALF	Second Vice-President
WILLIAM H. EDWARDS . . .	Secretary
STEPHEN O. METCALF . . .	Treasurer
ROYAL B. FARNUM	Executive Vice-President
ALEXANDER DORNER	Director of the Museum

TRUSTEES

Term expiring 1943

Mrs. MURRAY S. DANFORTH, Hon. JESSE H. METCALF

Term expiring 1942

HOUGHTON P. METCALF, Hon. THEODORE FRANCIS GREEN

Term expiring 1941

Miss MARGARET SHOVE MORRISS, G. ALDER BLUMER, M.D.

Term expiring 1940

WILLIAM S. INNIS, HARALD W. OSTBY

Term expiring 1939

WILLIAM H. EDWARDS, JOHN NICHOLAS BROWN

Term expiring 1938

WILLIAM T. ALDRICH, HENRY D. SHARPE

EX-OFFICIO

His Excellency Governor ROBERT E. QUINN

His Honor Mayor JAMES E. DUNNE

Director of Education, JAMES F. ROCKETT

The Superintendent of Providence Schools, JAMES L. HANLEY

Professor ALBERT D. MEAD, of Brown University

Professor WILL S. TAYLOR, of Brown University

Librarian of Providence Public Library, CLARENCE E. SHERMAN

MEMBERSHIP

Honorary Members

Governing Members for life who pay at one time \$100.00

Annual Governing Members who pay annual dues of \$10.00

Annual Members who pay annual dues of \$3.00

ADMISSIONS

HOURS OF OPENING. The galleries are open to the public on every day of the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the Fourth of July. From 10 A. M. to 5 P. M. week day and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays.

Twenty-five cents admission to the museum is charged on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the Museum is free on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

LIBRARY

The Library contains 12,655 volumes, 18,557 mounted photographs and reproductions, 11,514 lantern slides, and about 6,367 postcards. During the months of July and August the library is closed.

PUBLICATIONS

Four quarterly bulletins are issued and are sent free of charge to the members.

The year book of the school containing detailed information regarding its many activities, and presenting conditions of admission and a list of the courses given in its several departments, will be forwarded free of charge to prospective students and others who are interested in the institution and its work.

PHOTOGRAPHS ON SALE

Photographic copies of many of the objects belonging to the museum, including photographs of the Pendleton Collection of furniture, are on sale at the entrance to the museum.

COPYING

Permission to copy or photograph in the galleries of the museum may be obtained from the Curator. Such permits will not be issued for Sundays or legal holidays.